

Administration of Barack Obama, 2013

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Fundraiser in Pinecrest, Florida

November 8, 2013

The President. Thank you, everybody. Well, I told Leslie we should all just jump in the pool. [*Laughter*] But she thought that might not be appropriate. I just want to say to Leslie and her remarkable children thank you so much for the hospitality and the support.

Two other people I want to acknowledge: first of all, your Senator, one of the finest public servants we know, Mr. Bill Nelson. By the way, Bill, did you see "Gravity"?

Senator C. William Nelson. It is terrific.

The President. It is terrific. But I need to get a sense of what astronauts think about it. I always told Bill that I was mildly impressed that he was a U.S. Senator, much more impressed that he was an astronaut—[*laughter*—and just a great public servant. The other person I want to make sure I acknowledge is somebody who has the thankless job of recruiting great candidates and helping to make sure that we maintain a democratic majority in the Senate. He is a wonderful friend and somebody—by the way, Leslie—who used to be superintendent of schools and transformed the Denver school system. That's how I first met and knew him. He is a wonderful man, Mr. Michael Bennet.

So I'm going to keep the remarks very brief because I just want to spend most of the time interacting, getting questions and suggestions. We've gone through enormous challenges over the last 4 or 5 years: the worst recession since the Great Depression, oil leaks in the Gulf, transformative changes taking place throughout the Middle East, challenges around how we build an economy that works for everybody, the need to transform our education system, the challenges of climate change. And as a consequence, I think sometimes people are worried about what's the future for our kids going to be like. Are we going to be able to pass on to them the same incredible opportunities that a lot of us enjoyed as we were coming up?

And the main message I want to deliver to everybody is, I have never been more optimistic about America's possibilities for the future. The 21st century is one in which our wheelhouse, our skillset is perfectly adapted. In a global, interconnected world, we're the most innovative people on Earth. We've got the most entrepreneurial spirit of anybody on Earth. We've got incredible natural resources and energy. We have the best universities on Earth, a community college system that is underappreciated in terms of how we can train and create new skills for folks, the best workers in the world.

We've got a lot of stuff going for us. Lately, the one thing that's been holding us back is our Government and the seeming incapacity for people to come together and move forward on commonsense solutions. We've seen recent examples of that. Just as the economy keeps on trying to get traction, we have threats of shutdown and then shutdown and then threats of default, all of which dampens business enthusiasm and retards our ability to create more good jobs.

Immigration reform—Michael Bennet, Bill Nelson and others supported a bipartisan, comprehensive effort to move a bill forward that would transform our economy, cut our deficit, give young people opportunity and attract the best and the brightest. Right now it's stalled because of politics. We saw tragic deaths in Sandy Hook, Newtown. And the majority of the

American people agreed that we could have some commonsense legislation that would prevent people with mental illnesses, criminals from purchasing weapons. That stalled because of politics.

Here in Florida, we have the possibility of making sure that over a million people who don't have health insurance could get it right now and wouldn't have to go through a web site. We're working on that, but in the meantime, Medicaid expansion is something that you've already seen a number of States have done. And right away, you've got hundreds of thousands of people who have health insurance that didn't have it before. We could be doing it right now. It's not happening because of politics.

And so the challenge that we have is how do we get the wisdom and common sense and hard work of the American people reflected in our political process? And look, I'm a Democrat. So, obviously, I'm a little biased here. But I don't claim that Democrats have all the answers or that we're perfect. But I will say that if you just looked objectively at what the Democratic Party and Democratic Senators stand for right now, it's a lot more aligned with what the American people believe and what they care about than what a small faction of the other party is trying to promote.

And I'm confident that there's going to be an adjustment process where the Republican Party, kind of, moves back to reason and common sense. But they're only going to do it if our politics is reflected—or elections reflect that common sense. And if they're rewarded for cooperation and it—when they aren't looking out for the interests of the American people, there are some consequences. And that's why elections matter. That's why they count.

Those of you who care about whether judges are going to protect our core freedoms, including women's ability to control their own health care decisions, that's going to depend on whether or not Bill Nelson and Michael Bennet and others still stay in the majority. Whether we're going to be able to deal with climate change in a serious way, that's going to depend on whether Bill Nelson and Michael Bennet are still in the majority. So what you're doing here matters a lot.

And I just want you to know that, because I know a lot of you around the table, I know you're already—you've worked on behalf of me in the past. I've run my last election. But my capacity to do what needs to be done over the next 3 years is going to be dependent on having a great team in Washington. And that's what we're going to be fighting for over the next several months, at the same time as we're fighting to govern in a way that delivers for middle class families and working families all across the country. They deserve a Government that works for them. That's what I want to provide. And I know that's what Bill and Michael, all the candidates that Michael has recruited, want to provide as well.

So thank you for being here, everybody. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:29 p.m. at the residence of Leslie Miller Saiontz. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee fundraisers :: Pinecrest, FL.

Locations: Pinecrest, FL.

Names: Bennet, Michael F.; Miller Saiontz, Leslie; Nelson, C. William.

Subjects: Budget, Federal : Public debt limit; Congress : Bipartisanship; Connecticut : Shootings in Newtown; Democratic Party : Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Elections : 2014 congressional elections; Florida : Democratic Party events; Florida : President's visit; Government organization and employees : Funding lapse and partial furlough; Health and medical care : Health insurance exchanges; Health and medical care : Medicare and Medicaid; Immigration and naturalization : Reform; Law enforcement and crime : Gun control.

DCPD Number: DCPD201300770.